



Surekha
"Un-Claimed & Other Urban Fictions"
Video Installation
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**“Un-Claimed & Other Urban F(r)ictions”
Video Installation**

Surekha has been exploring the possibilities of the video form, negotiating the public and private spaces. She uses photography and video to archive, document and perform. The current video installation “Un-Claimed & other Urban F(r)ictions” highlights the unusual pre-occupations of people who assign a specific personality to the city. They propose a sense of self-dependence, an alternative mode of life pre-occupation; and a notion of restraint against the loss of individuation through global uniformity. And these videos contain a different take on the city's personality exposing the stark reality of the city.

The videos are shown with an installation of E-resource, along with the idea of recycling, leading to the possible sanity of the city and the notion of the urban.
Sound: real time noise from the streets.

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LAUGHING ROMEO'S & NOBODY'S WALLS

After her last video installation 'Communing with urban heroines', Surekha's attention seems to have shifted from super women, to super urban personae. Instead of hop-scotch playing, sky borne women here, Surekha uses the handy video camera to 'record' on site, some familiar scenes and meetings in the city retaining their impromptu feel.

Shot with a steady hand replete with the noise of the static and the city, these moving images vie to join the tradition of innumerable videos that are constantly being shot, cut and spliced to be uploaded on sites like Youtube and downloaded into our living rooms. Essentially documentary, devoid of drama these videos hold onto time, space and the subject for their importance and meaningfulness.

As installation, computer key boards dress the walls, monitors create enclosures and mouses dangle together as adornment. Disposed computer paraphernalia or resourced e-waste stands here as a drab souvenir of urbanity and its inevitable consumer culture. This network of molded polymer and dust carpeted cathode ray tubes blacks opposite to the personal, humane imagery of the charismatic personalities projected in the other room.

A retired old man who laughs at the break of dawn; a woman who eats and sleeps in a public park (for thirty years now); a talkative Hindi speaking man and his articulate, English speaking ex-mason associate delving on E-resource and creating jobs for 'economically weak Muslim women' and men who undertake to bury unclaimed dead bodies in the city. What makes them icons? Is it their refusal to get swallowed into the homogenous urban tide? Each carve out a space, transform, laugh with their surrounding population to health, clean it up with their zest and entrepreneurship or sit outside it in rebellion like the woman in the park. Interviewed, they talk in monologues about their lives or interests.

An alternative set of videos projected through some of the piled computer monitors reflect on more banal aspects of the city and its space. 'Nobody's Walls', that get crimsoned with *paan* stains, walls crowned with domes that make up the legislative assembly and the walls of humanity clutching placards in front of it; walls that get beautified and others that get bulldozed, all come into comical focus. 'Reflections' a split screen video juxtaposes long stretches of bulldozed walls of residences with chanced images like the not so lissome princely Wodeyar smelling a tiny rose, painted on a public wall. 'Not all towers fall' an animated fare silhouettes the popular monuments of the world from the Stonehenge to the sculpture in Delhi of Gandhi leading the Dandi march being 'missed' by a small, dexterous jet air plane. Directly alluded at the twin towers, it contains a moment of drama that is a well meant joke.

Seen in whole Surekha's video installation contrasts the rational with the organic, physical and the personal. The cold stolidity of the computers fall faceless in front of the iconic presences of Surekha's 'Romeo's and Juliets'. Unclaimed and other urban F(r)ictions appears to be a ride in nostalgia from its 'mudde hotlus', to a hopeful look at some of the city's better attributes, led by some remarkable people, amidst its multiplex culture, fly over booms and decreasing green cover.

R Dhanya, Art critic, Bangalore

